

## DESCRIPTION OF A NEW PRAIRIE DOG (CYNOMYS MEXICANUS) FROM MEXICO.\*

BY DR. C. HART MERRIAM.

In March, 1891, Mr. Clark P. Streater collected a series of ten skins and skulls of Prairie Dogs at La Ventura, in the extreme southeastern corner of the Province of Coahuila, Mexico, 220 miles south of Laredo, on the boundary between Texas and Mexico. Mr. Streater writes that the colony from which these animals were obtained was the largest he had ever seen. The species proves to be new. It resembles the common Prairie Dog of the Great Plains (*C. ludoricianus*), but differs from it in being somewhat larger and in having a much longer tail. The tail differs further from that of any known Prairie Dog in the extent and intensity of the black on the terminal portion. The black covers the distal half below and forms a submarginal band around the terminal half above, being both more extensive and blacker in color than in *ludoricianus*.

The new species may be known by the following description:

***Cynomys mexicanus* sp. nov.**

*Type No.* { $\frac{266}{333}$  $\frac{423}{836}$ } ♂ ad. U. S. National Museum (Department of Agriculture Collection). From La Ventura, Coahuila, Mexico, Mar. 24, '91. Collected by Clark P. Streater. (Original No. 625.)

*Measurements.*—Total length, 419; tail vertebra, 107; hairs, 24 + [worn off at tips]; hind foot, 63.

*General Characters.*—The largest species of the genus; similar to *Cynomys ludoricianus*, but larger, with longer and blacker tail.

*Color.*—Upper parts everywhere grizzled buffy-fulvous, sparsely mixed with long black hairs; under parts and feet buffy. Tail above: concolor with the back, but with a broad submarginal band and tip of black, which reaches back more than half the length of the tail. Tail below: proximal half buffy like belly, washed with fulvous; distal half black, grizzled with buffy, from the color of the basal part of the hairs, which shows through.

The type specimen has not completed the spring molt, and the posterior two-thirds of the back is pale rufus from the wearing away of the light tips of the hairs, bringing the subapical rufus zone to the surface. Most of the specimens have completed the molt.

\* Read before the Biological Society of Washington, May 14, 1892.

*Cranial Characters.*—Compared with *C. ludovicianus* the skull is broader and shorter, with shorter nasal bones, postorbital processes, and zygomatic arches; jugals with antero-inferior angle not only thickened to form a triangular plate, but produced downward so as to overhang and protect from the outside the fossa beneath; horizontal part of jugal broader and shorter; ascending arm of jugal much thinner and not forming a noticeable plate between maxillary and lachrymal; audital bullæ larger and more inflated; basi-occipital narrower; frontal shield more concave; posterior border of inflected angle of mandible more nearly at right angles to axis of jaw (more squarely truncated); dentition less massive; anterior face of incisors strongly yellow (instead of white or faintly straw-colored); upper incisor with an indistinct groove in front of the inner half.

The length of the nasals equals the distance from the anterior lip of the foramen magnum to the posterior edge of the palate. In *C. ludovicianus* the nasals are much longer.

In cranial characters *C. ludovicianus arizonensis* of Mearns, from southern Arizona, is in some respects intermediate between true *ludovicianus* and *mexicanus*, especially in the unusual development of the triangular plate of the jugal, size of the audital bullæ, and breadth of basi-occipital. In the other cranial characters here pointed out, *C. mexicanus* differs from *C. l. arizonensis* as much as from *C. ludovicianus* proper.

Measurements of Specimens Collected of *Cynomys mexicanus*.

U. S. National Museum No.		Original No.	Locality.	Date.	Sex.	Total length.	Tail vertebræ.	Hind foot.
Skin.	Skull.							
26426	33839	622	La Ventura, Coahuila, Mexico.	Mar. 24, '91	♂	430	106	64
26422	33835	623	.....do.....	.....do.....	♂	422	114	62
26429	33842	624	.....do.....	.....do.....	♂	415	102	59
26423	33836	625	.....do.....	.....do.....	♂	419	107	63*
26428	33841	626	.....do.....	.....do.....	♂	415	103	61
26425	33838	627	.....do.....	.....do.....	♀	390	94	62
26421	33834	628	.....do.....	.....do.....	♀	400	99	60
26427	33840	629	.....do.....	.....do.....	♀	392	102	61
26424	33837	630	.....do.....	.....do.....	♀	398	104	62
26430	33843	631	.....do.....	.....do.....	♀	383	94	59

\*Type.